

# MEDICAREMATTERS

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## LIMITED INCOME MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES CAN SAVE NOW!!!



With the rising costs of pharmaceutical drugs, people with Medicare living on a fixed income are being faced with choosing between their prescription drugs and other basic necessities. During the past year, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** has worked diligently to help low-income beneficiaries pay for their prescriptions with the passage of the **Medicare Modernization Act**

**(MMA) of 2004**. As part of the **MMA**, the **Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card Program** is allowing Medicare beneficiaries, who are enrolled in a Medicare Savings Program, to meet the income requirement for a \$1,200 credit that they can use in 2004 and 2005 to pay for their drug costs.

Twenty-two national Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card sponsors have agreed to facilitate the \$1,200 credit enrollment for over 1 million Medicare Savings Programs beneficiaries. Subsequently, CMS has randomly assigned those eligible beneficiaries, who have not already enrolled in a card, into one of the national Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards.

Card sponsors have begun mailing information to Medicare Savings Programs-enrolled individuals to inform them of their enrollment in their designated discount card. The information explains how to activate their card to start receiving their \$1,200 credit. To activate the credit, the beneficiary makes one call to **1-800-MEDICARE** or to the card sponsor's 800 number, which is provided in the information being sent. The beneficiary will be prompted to answer two questions to confirm their eligibility for the credit:

1. Do you have other health insurance with any outpatient prescription drug coverage?
2. Do you have a monthly income (including spouse, if married) above or below \$12,569 for singles and \$16,862 for couples?

Beneficiaries will also be able to learn about other choices they have if they wish to choose another card. The card begins providing discounts on November 1.

If a beneficiary is not eligible for the \$1,200 credit because of other drug coverage, they will still be able to use the drug card they received and benefit from any associated discounts. Medicare Savings Programs beneficiaries who wish to cancel enrollment in a card must call the drug card sponsor at the toll free number provided and request their enrollment be canceled. As a result of this new program for enrollment in the drug card program, all beneficiaries in Medicare Savings Programs can start saving on their drug costs.

Additional information will be posted on <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/> as it becomes available.

